| Learning Conversation Notes | |
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| Name of Partner: | Date: |
| Superior Court High Conflict Calendar (STEP) | April 20, 2006 |
| Number of Children Served: 61 | Ages: 0 yr (3), 1 yr (5), 2 yr (17), |
| Families with children 0-5: 54 | 3 yr (11), 4 yr (14), 5 yr (11) |
| When Served: | Gender: Ethnicity: |
| September 15, 2005 – April 20, 2006 | 34 - Male 39 - Caucasian |
| | 27 - Female 20 - Hispanic |
| | 2 - African Amer. |

Conversation Participants: Nancy Baggett, Anna DeBrocky, Suzanne Feris, Don Ferretti, Will Hafelfinger, Chris Trejo, Barbara Guenther – Facilitator, and Janice Critchlow – Recorder

Outcomes:

- Parents served through this program will communicate effectively with each other and their children, cooperatively co-parent, facilitate a more nurturing environment, and promote positive mental and emotional child development.
- Parents will demonstrate sustained ability to resolve parental conflict independent of the court, utilizing community resources as needed.

Performance Measures:

- Demographics (number of 0-5 served by gender, age, ethnicity, and when services were provided).
- Placer Early Childhood Outcome Screens
- Client Exit Survey Summary
- Post graduation assessment of sustained ability to resolve conflict independent of the court (phone contact)

What is this data telling us about achievement of outcomes?

Demographics

Hispanic participants have increased because the Case Coordinator, Chris Trejo, speaks Spanish fluently. She can facilitate all meetings and parents have an interpreter from the start.

High number of two-year olds – this may be caused by a variety of issues. It may indicate that people are referred to the program after a few years of conflict. Additionally by the time the child is two, he/she is mobile, verbal, taking the family conflict in and reacting to it. It's harder to shield the child from conflict once they are more aware of their environment.

In the total program, the majority of the caseload is families with 0-5 year olds. Families will older children tend to have CPS involvement.

Client Exit Survey (administered upon exiting the program)

This survey includes the first seven questions of the Post Graduation Survey.

There is no data because no clients exited during this assessment period.

Post Graduation Survey (administered after 4 months of exiting the program) (attached)

Couples

These parents are quick to say negative things so it's significant when they say positive statements.

The survey results show that most parents are feeling better about their coparenting situation, as indicated by no parent responses thinking the situation is worse.

One couple has very different answers on most questions. This is consistent with other details of their relationship.

The positive responses seem to indicate that the program is working.

Question 7: Indicates that parents are continuing to be able to resolve conflict independent of the court.

Follow up survey does seem to speak to how parents are able to co-parent.

Singles

These four surveys were with single fathers with full custody of the children – all the mothers have substance abuse problems. Most of the mothers are no longer actively involved in the children's lives.

Increased trend for fathers to have custody of the children. Bias about this needs to be addressed every week. For instance, welfare will request proof of custody but they might not request the proof from a mother.

Questions that are related to the children show that in all cases there has been improvement in the child's development.

Based on verbal responses, it was easy to identify which fathers they came from because they show evidence of the work done in the words used. For instance, *No hitting* indicates that the father really understood *No corporal punishment*.

The follow-up survey does not speak to how singles are co-parenting (because they aren't) but does have data on how the children's needs are being met.

Placer Early Childhood Outcome Screens

Screen showing all indicators for open cases

At intake, the lowest indicators are #2 and #10.

#2 = Free of indicators of physical, sexual, or emotional violence

#10 = Achieving appropriate level of emotional development

The best were #3 and #5.

#3 = Not at risk of injury or illness

#5 = Free of disease or illness or medically managed

Even if children are in day care or preschool, the children still have delays in learning (#13-16) and self-comforting (#4).

Length in program

The range of days between screenings was 42-945. The mean was 325 days. Generally takes at least 90 days to get into a parenting plan that works. This is not a quick-fix program.

Comparing, entry and exit, the exit line mirrors the intake line – just higher – with the exception of #4. It looks very even. On average, this group of children is doing better.

#2 Free of indicators of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse

A child doesn't come into this program without needing help on this indicator. The violence may not be directed at the child but the child may be witnessing violence, which creates emotional abuse.

Graph shows movement to the left, showing improvement. Forty children improved, 18 remained the same, and three declined.

#4 Demonstrates appropriate self-comforting behavior

Children often come into the program with high anxiety and do not display self-comforting behaviors. Many are tense and fear abandonment. At entry, staff often does not observe children who are able to comfort themselves. In some instances, parents report regression in child development, i.e., thumbsucking and toileting accidents.

Staff teaches the parents and children to use a calendar. Comforts the children around custody routines even though they don't really understand time.

When parents co-parent cooperatively, the children relax and become able to use appropriate self-comforting behavior.

#7 Free of exposure to illicit drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other environmental hazards

Improving overall. Thirty-four children improved, 23 remained the same, and 4 children declined.

#10 Achieving appropriate level of emotional development

Forty-three children improved, 15 remained the same, and 3 children declined.

Parents are told that their behavior is negatively affecting their children's emotional development and that it is child abuse. Staff really drives the point home. Children involved with the STEP program have more appropriate emotional development once the parents are aware of this.

#11 Living in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment

Thirty-eight children improved, 20 remained the same, and 3 declined.

Once the conflict settles down, the children are often in a safer and more nurturing environment.

12 Interacting appropriately with all persons at current residence

Forty-one children improved, 16 remained the same, and 4 children declined.

This is an important indicator for the STEP Program because most of the children have at least two residences and may have several more (mom's house, dad's house, day care house, grandparent's house, girl/boy friend's house).

Once their parents have the tools, the children are able to settle down and relax. Speaks to first outcome.

#18 Experiencing a positive relationship with the child

Forty-one children improved, 19 remained the same, and 1 declined.

At entry, parents may report a positive relationship with the child but staff believes that it's impossible to have a positive relationship with the child if there is high conflict between the parents.

Parent/caregivers are experiencing a better relationship with the child because of the program.

#19 Engaged in positive parenting and child development practices.

Thirty-nine showed improvement, 18 remained the same, and 4 declined. Much improvement in this indicator.

Report from Will Hafelfinger -- Deputy, Placer County Sheriff's Department – about the co-parenting class:

Deputy Hafelfinger is a Bailiff for family court and the co-parenting class. He notices positive changes in the parents over the 6 weeks of the class. Parents say less negative things about each other after a few weeks of the class, may start carpooling with each other, or may exchange the children's belongings in a positive way.

The class is about how to help the child and not about the parents liking each other. Brings the issues home to the parents so that they can understand how they are affecting their child.

In what ways will we apply what we have learned from our data?

It's effective to do the follow-up surveys because the parents may have some increased perspective with the passing of time. Also, may show parents have continued to work on co-parenting issues even after they've left the program.

Question 10 on the Follow up Surveys:

Does not adequately address whether community agencies are being utilized.

It worked well to use the intern (someone not directly involved in the program/neutral party) to administer the follow-up survey.

Other points that were made during the conversation:

Increased Hispanic caseload has highlighted the lack of bilingual community services in part of the county. STEP staff has discovered some and are willing to share with other partners. There are some co-parenting coaching counselors that are Spanish speaking.

Next steps:

Re Question 10 on the Follow up Surveys:

Does not adequately address whether community agencies are being utilized. Needs to be changed.

Consider giving parents some examples:

- Have you utilized the services of the community agencies or private counselors to assist you in working out your parenting issues, such as church, school?
- Are there services that you would like that you don't have?
- Have you used community resources to help you care for your child (ren) appropriately?

Next Learning Conversation: Wednesday, December 13, 1:00 – 4:30 pm